

Applicant : Brandyn Webb, et al.
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Attorney's Docket No.: 07844-478001 / P442

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 were pending as of the action mailed July 1, 2004.

Independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended. New claims 31-36 have been submitted, of which claims 31, 33, 35, and 36 are independent. No new matter has been added.

Reconsideration of the action is requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The specification has been amended as suggested by the examiner.

Claim Objections

Claims 12 and 13 were found to be allowable, but were objected to as depending from rejected base claims. They are allowable because they depend from claim 1, which is allowable as explained later in these remarks. In addition, new claims 31 and 32 correspond to claims 12 and 13. The applicant submits that they are allowable as claims 12 and 13 were.

Claims 27 and 28 were found to be allowable, but were objected to as depending from rejected base claims. They are allowable because they depend from claim 16, which is allowable as explained later in these remarks. In addition, new claims 33 and 34 correspond to claims 27 and 28. The applicant submits that they are allowable as claims 27 and 28 were.

Rejections under Section 102

Claims 1, 9-11, 14, 16, 24-26, and 29 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,425,012 ("Trovato"). Of these claims, claims 1 and 16 are independent.

Claims 1 and 16 have been amended to recite that a forum "is dedicated to a particular topic". Because of this, one can distinguish forums provided by a system or method from each other by their different topics. In Trovato, there is nothing to distinguish the chat networks 131-133 from each other than their current set of users. Thus, unlike with Trovato, with the claimed invention one can create various different forums dedicated to different topics, so that users of a

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computer service may enter a particular room and discuss a topic with other participants who desire to discuss the same topic.

For at least this reason, claims 1 and 16 and their dependent claims are not anticipated by, and are allowable over, Trovato.

Rejections under Section 103

Claims 4-8, and 19-23 were rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato in view of U.S. Patent 6,336,133 ("Morris").

Claims 4-8 and claims 19-23 depend from claims 1 and 16, respectively, and are allowable for at least the reasons that apply to those independent claims.

Claims 2-3, and claims 17-18 were rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato and Morris, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,400,381 ("Barrett").

The examiner acknowledges that Trovato and Morris fail to show receiving information indicating forums the user has been in (claims 2, 13, 17, 28) or clones of forums the user has been in (claims 3, 18). The examiner finds the required teaching in Barrett, and combines it with Trovato and Morris.

Barrett describes:

A system and method for promoting social interaction among computer users displaying similar historical activities on the World Wide Web, based not on a single document access or on a predefined grouping, but on the activities of the users. A history of a group of documents accessed, or a pattern of document access, . . . are gathered and communicated to a place server module. When the histories of two or more computers match . . . , a communication group is established by the place server module and communicated to a chat server. The chat server then automatically establishes a chat room for members of the communication group. (Barrett, Abstract (emphasis added))

Thus, Barrett, like Trovato and Morris, fails to teach or suggest a system that provides a forum for user interaction that is dedicated to a particular topic, as required by claim 1, the base claim of both claim 2 and claim 3. In Barrett, a communication group is formed, not by users

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seeking to enter particular forums, but rather by a place server module, and a chat room is automatically established by the chat server. (Abstract)

Because Barrett does not have the concept of a forum, Barrett necessarily cannot teach or suggest the action of "receiving information from one or more other users indicating one or more forums each of the other users has been in, wherein each other forum each of the other users has been in is dedicated to a topic different from that of the first forum" (claim 2), or "receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what forums each of the other users has been in, wherein each of the forums each of the other users has been in is dedicated to a respective topic" (claim 3). Barrett has no teaching of a system or method that can recognize that a particular user has been in a particular forum, or more particularly, in a particular clone or instance of a particular forum. Consequently, Barrett does not provide the teaching required to establish that a system or method that uses such information is obvious. For at least these reasons, Barrett does not provide the teaching that Trovato and Morris lack, and combining the three references is insufficient to establish that the claims are obvious. For at least these reasons, claims 2 and 3, and the corresponding claims 17 and 18, are allowable.

Claims 15 and 30 are rejected as being unpatentable over Trovato, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,888,731 ("Liles").

Claims 15 and 30 depend from independent claims 1 and 16, respectively, and are allowable for at least the same reasons that apply to claims 1 and 16.

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New Claims

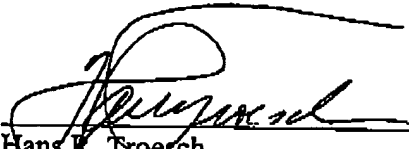
New claims 31 and 32 correspond to claims 12 and 13, and new claims 33 and 34 correspond to claims 27 and 28. These new claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as their corresponding claims are allowable.

New claim 35 corresponds to claims 1, 3, and 15, and it has additional limitations; and new claim 36 corresponds to claims 16, 18, and 30, and it has additional limitations.

New claims 37 and 38 correspond to claims 7 and 22, respectively, and have additional limitations. These new claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as their corresponding claims are allowable.

Please apply the charge for extra claims, the charge for a one-month extension of time, and any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 01 Nov 04
Hans K. Troesch
Reg. No. 36,950

Fish & Richardson P.C.
500 Arguello Street, Suite 500
Redwood City, California 94063
Telephone: (650) 839-5070
Facsimile: (650) 839-5071

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